

The Rejected Voice

A Song of Genius Slain



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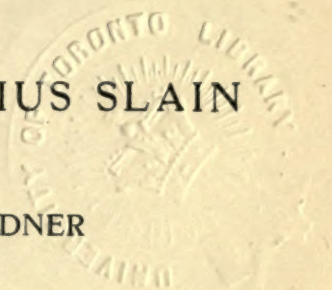
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The Rejected Voice

A SONG OF GENIUS SLAIN

By NELSON GARDNER




The Great Columbian Poem at Last has Appeared,
and Mighty Song Once More is With Us

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By NELSON GARDNER

PROEM

The composer of this Prometheian book must pay with his life the prophet's debt to envy, and not while he lives will his song be accepted:

But by death will his lyre be only uplifted, and not all the false hearts under heaven can prevent the coming of the day when his now rejected works will everywhere be read.

Also has he completed an Indian epic poem whose lines exceed in number seven thousand.

Were this work placed before the public truly impartial, men no more would lament the decline of poetry, for here is the greatest song of love and war that ever was composed;

But in seeking a publisher he offers pearls in vain.

Follows an excerpt descriptive of the Mohegan heroine of this forest romance:

"A maiden nor audacious nor demure,
With lip like summer but with heart snow pure.
Thus well in her were mingled earth and air,—
One lending force, the other making fair.
When forth she stepped, in skin of deer attired,
The heart respected while the eye admired.

Beads on her bosom sparkled as she breathed,
And round her royal throat three times were wreathed.
A zone of shells encircled twice her waist,
And moccasins, that favored rest or haste,
On buoyant feet in glade and glen she wore,
While in her hand a bow she often bore:

But not one song of summer did she still,

"For cruelty ne'er hateful made her skill;
And birds that in affright from others flew
Round her would tamely flock, as if they knew
That she their sister was, and had a soul
That like bright wings could soar, and loathed control
As nobly as did they, and had a heart
That like the linnet's sang; and no sly art
Required she to bring them to her hand,
For birds feel more than mortals understand.

In sooth we say
That stainless maids are of diviner clay
Than other beings that below are born.
One in a desert singly might adorn
The land that barren lies, or still more dear
Make any cherished place, and saint and seer
The majesty of maidenhood must own,
For lovely is virginity alone:

And primrose, violet, and daffodil,
Soon though they die, in dreams enchant us still.
They, being very fair, are therefore frail,
But follow blooms that not so quickly fail,
Though autumn wither all, and partly lost
May be their fragrance even ere the frost:

Nor is youth's charm a superficial gift
Because its flight, alas, is all too swift.

Trees rich in balsam shared with her their health,
On body, yea, and soul, bestowing wealth
Exceeding other boon. As bright she grew

"As blossoms that at dawn are laved with dew;
For fragrance of surrounding shrubs and flowers
Her soul all day absorbed, while shadowed bowers
Life's currents all kept cool. Where drank the Deer,
Her eyes reflected oft cold streams and clear,
And brightened were thereby."

.

The Chief of Mohawks next is portrayed:—

"In panther skin he gallantly was drest,
And scarlet was his sanguinary crest—
His crest held always high: yea, plumes bright red
Like flames arose, and flared above his head.
Fleet was his foot, though broad he was, and tall,
And warlike, warlike, was his aspect all.
Not marble, nay, nor bronze, took ever mould
Expressing heart more proud than his, or bold.

With spear and shield in bushes laid aside
Did he toward Sylvan Star in secret glide.
She saw him not, nor felt she any fear,
As drew the furtive Chief of Foemen near.

He came as creeps a cougar on a fawn,
And man might not defend, nor woman warn;
For marked not any earthly eye the foe
That threatened her whose conscience was as snow;
But when the enemy was very nigh,
She turned, and saw, and raised one piercing cry,
And even as the heavens heard the sound
The Mohawk reached her with a lightning bound."

By their prolonged rejection of the composer's song will the literary tribunals of his day themselves ultimately be judged. Well it is for Columbia the Great that the vigorous legions of the land resemble not at all the cults that live by the tongue and the pen.

The composition of this book occupied a score of years.

EXHORTATION

From Erebus far off the battle cloud

At last hath swooped upon us, and the glare
Of scarlet lightning, leagued with thunder loud,
Makes red the sea, and bids new coasts beware.

Vain in these madding days hath been our prayer
For democratic peace. The guilt of kings
Upon ourselves the fiery whirlwind brings.
Prepare, prepare, Columbia, thy blade!
Sharp make thy steel, lest sharper steel invade.

PRELUDE

Derided will this song be, and denied,
 As long as lives the singer ; he will pass,
Alone, and not akin to any class,
 Through shadows unto sleep ; but there the tide
Sharply will turn, for scribes no more can hide
 His lyric gospel then ; but life, alas,
 Will drown his golden speech with strident brass—
His speech that all false governance defied.

Envy would even Orpheus reject,
 While rampant Avarice with zeal would break
A harp as bright as Heaven, if it spake
 Against its yellow code ; and hence the lyre
That doth enameled evils here dissect,
 Arouses with its lustre only ire.

PRELUDE

II

Why girds our Muse against so many things,
And wherefore do we recklessly offend
All powers whereunto the prudent bend?
Truly, for that our shell's indignant strings
Tell of a bard whose words had flaming wings,
Yet whom the world sought therefore but to rend,
For highly did his harp on fire offend
The mercenary soul that never sings.

All the mendacities we here impeach,
And all the vulpine forces we defy,
Exhaled an alien influence whereby
Was Song's Apostle stifled;—yea, each shed
Its own miasma, that failed not to reach
The Voice of Vision Deep, by eagles led.

BATTLE-BORN

I

Upon a rugged shore, where always rang

 The primal war cry of the white-plumed sea,
There dwelt a youth, by rapture, and by pang,
 Instructed in the lore of poetry.

 One of the tribe of singing seers was he,
Whose hearts and minds are formed to feel and know,—
They that stand first in wisdom, and in woe;
Whose voices wake the world, and bravely chide
The wrong that reigns wherever men reside.

NATURE'S ACCOLADE

II

No worldly rank had he of whom we tell,

 Although his song consorted with the sky.
Nobility may in a cottage dwell,—

 Pre-eminent, though few its crown descry,
 While sits depravity in places high;

For false is each aristocratic plan,
And foreign to the fellowship of man.

Large nature mocks each Liliputian's pride,
And nor by courts nor kings may be denied.

THE REJECTED VOICE

HIGHEST PRECEPTORS

III

Closely he conned, with comprehending mind,
The few great tomes that triumph over time.
Therein did he eternal treasures find,
And nature, too, imparted truths sublime;
Hence had his speech arisen into rhyme,
And he could sing unto the souls of men:
He brought the sacred music back again,
But still was he a creature of the earth,
Whereon is death less terrible than birth.

DRIVEN

IV

Although he loved the spiritual life,
And had the power of the pure in heart,
His gifts availed him not in mundane strife,
For soon they die that dare to live apart.
He might not learn the money-monger's art,
Though urged to so attempt by pressing need.
Bewildered he approached the marts of greed,—
Acquainted with such things as last away,
But alien to the idols of a day.

TALL BROWED PRETENDERS

V

The clans that wield the quill opposed his path,
For always living prophet angers them.
His sad, rebuking voice, aroused their wrath,
They hated him with mediocre phlegm;
But fearing, save in secret, to condemn,
They hid his word, not voicing even blame;
Hence never heard the people of his name.
He might not reach his merited estate,
For sons of Pharisees locked fast each gate.

ENMESHED

VI

Thus want was all his wages for his verse,
And living in a world that hath its price,
He found that even poets need a purse,
Although they scorn each bartering device,
And deem that never trade is overnice:
Hence like a beacon in a blind domain,
Sought he a city given up to gain,
And there, with neither craft equipped, nor skill,
He fought unarmed, and yet contended still.

THE REJECTED VOICE TRANSFIGURED CHAINS

VII

He bent his ardent mind to dreary toil,
And fled not from the uncongenial task:
But cities were to him unfruitful soil,
Where shone no beam wherein his soul might bask.
In vain did he for healing sunlight ask.
A martyr to a mercenary creed,
Thus was the minstrel sacrificed to Greed:
But in Gethsemane learned he to sing,
And from his yoke shall liberation spring.

IDEALITY BOUND

VIII

Within a grim abode of steam and steel
He earned the bread that makes the body live:
And little cared they there what hearts might feel,
For pomp must grab and penury must give.
What matter if the mind be sensitive
To things that trouble not the swift machine?
Expect no sentiment in such a scene,
For industry holds only ducats dear,
And cold though be its hives, its coffers cheer.

HARP OF THE HUMBLE

IX

He knew how terrible is modern toil.

Himself had delved among the soot and grime,
That can men's souls as well as garments soil,
And goad from galling indigence to crime.

But heart of him, though cleft, ceased not to climb.
He learned to quench desire, and still endure,
Till he became the prophet of the poor;—
The minstrel of immeasurable grief,
In sorrow, and in sympathy, the chief.

DUST ANTAGONIZED

X

Such pride as minions evermore oppose,

Such meekness as inflated churls deem weak,
These in his nature, like internal foes,

Against his rising fought, and made men seek
To bend him much, or break, as though a peak
Were lower than a plain; for dwarfs condemn
Prometheus for differing from them.
Their own deficiency they ne'er confess,
But seek to make the greater seem the less.

THE REJECTED VOICE
MUSIC OF ADVERSITY

XI

His heart was more than Caesar's body hacked.
For every song that gushed therefrom a gash
Marked red effusion too: so was he racked,
Although most prudent, more than are the rash
Who vital forces waste. Where others dash
There drooped he unto death; doomed so to bend
That he might feel, and therefore comprehend,
All misery that tortured ever man,
And pity grief as but affliction can.

PURCHASED BY PANGS

XII

The music of the soul so long was mute
That stilled it seemed for aye. When in a cloud,
A tragic lyre, more tender than a lute,
Descended unto earth, and there endowed
A singer by hoarse voices disavowed;—
Whom nails and thorns so terribly had torn
That in his breast was melody reborn;
For by his hundred wounds the Poet won
The gift that brightest shines when day is done.

THE REJECTED VOICE
SHROUDS THAT REVEAL

17

XIII

In midnight had he mansions, for sad veils
Did but enrich his vision, and his gaze
Most triumphed where the world's perception fails;
Since often noon-light will beholders daze,
While constellations burn not, though they blaze,
For space makes bland their fires; and he ere dawn
Adored those gems that furthest are withdrawn,
And heard the anthems of the Great Beyond,
Whence cosmic hymns to lisping hearts respond.

VOICES OF JEWELS

XIV

He like a lapidary shaped his lay,
And glamor of the pearl did he transpose
Into translucent sound. What rubies say
With sanguine chords he told. His harp's sweet throes
Did all the hues that jewels have disclose;
And mirrored he in music every fire
Expressive of ethereal desire
That dreams or flames in moon or star born stones,
And matched their lustrous tints with precious tones.

THE REJECTED VOICE

CHORDS OF FIRE

XV

Cool flames caressed the iridescent strings
 Wherewith his harp transfigured clod and cloud.
Bright chords thereof to heavy death gave wings,
 And lined with gold of dawn night's purple shroud:
 Yea, and the lunar bow his lyre endowed
With every palpitating hue and tone
That glorifies with melody earth's groan;
While sometimes crimson grew his instrument
As awful war a weeping color lent.

PALADIN OF PEACE

XVI

For sowers in captivity he sang,
 Uplifting an emancipating note.
Not unacquainted with the bondman's pang,
 For manacled humanity he wrote;
 And unto Peace did he his voice devote,
For Peace was his religion, and the sword—
Drawn even by the people, he abhorred;
And saw he that incendiary rage,
That rather burns than builds, vain war must wage.*

* Written before the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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PARADOXICAL GLORY

XVII

Fortune permits not any man to mount
In all ways over others. While she lends
She likewise takes away, and none may count
On her consistent favor, for she bends
The being she uplifts, and hail descends
Upon the highest heads. So did she stab
The bard herself redeemed from regions drab,
And threefold lightning blasted half his brain,
Lest he on earth should god-like strength attain.

BEAUTY RESTRICTED

XVIII

Taint of mortality can none escape,
For hangs on every pilgrim's soul a pall.
Care, like a shadow, haunts each carnal shape,
And if not facts, then fallacies, plague all
That walk the earth, or shall we say—that crawl:
And seems each grace some weakness to entail,—
As heights rise cold, and flowers white prove frail,
While soon is sullied snow. Larks sweetest sing,
But golden voice denies them gorgeous wing.

THE REJECTED VOICE

FRIGID HEIGHTS

XIX

Forbidden bough, of thy informing fruit
Must all condemned humanity partake,
And follows bitter strife between the brute
And angel in us. Spirits most awake
Most feel internal discord. Whirlwinds shake
The bosom and the brain of them that scale
The heights that peer above the drowsy vale;
And more, far more, for each mis-step they pay
Than do the loungers on the lower way.

VOLCANIC HEARTS

XX

Man is a soul caught in a carnal mesh,
Whence come his inconsistencies and woes.
A captive in incorrigible flesh,
The fettered spirit wars with many foes;
And sad humanity's incessant throes
Denote that day and death contend within:
The liberating light at last must win,
But tears and tribulation now abound,
And writhing forms are in all regions found.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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NEED AND GREED

XXI

Foul is the multitude of mouth and mind,
 Yet how shall creatures harassed as they are,
And girt about with governance unkind,
 Remember, as they moil, the morning star?
 No marvel if fair thoughts abide afar
From squalid dwellings, when in gorgeous halls
Is only found such charity as galls,
And art is made a toy to please the taste
Of epicures that want not, though they waste.

TOIL THAT TORTURES

XXII

Excessive labor is the modern curse, —
 Prop of its pride, and pillar of its pain;
For plunderers that deify the purse
 From brothers' tears their revenues obtain.
 More souls they crush than are in battle slain,
For though the victims perish not so fast,
They desperately strive, and die at last
With backs untimely bowed; for Greed's behest
Permits not minds to rise, nor limbs to rest.*

* Written before the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE
COFFERS IN CONTROL

XXIII

Yea, Gold is all, and grace of no regard,
For Midas reigns, with petrifying touch,
And that which glitters evermore is hard,
And money now makes might, that seizes much.
Not swords that cleave, but cunning hands that clutch,
To-day subdue the world, while coin makes kings
To whom defeated labor tribute brings,
And justice nods, and faith and freedom pass,
According as these monarchs dross amass.*

CHILDREN AS CHATTELS

XXIV

Lo, even children bend to tasks that break,
Performing work that weakens the mature:
Thus are they sacrificed for profit's sake;—
How else might capital rich spoils secure?
And want makes victims easy to procure.
Death lurks in dividends, and work is war,
When men the Yellow Deity adore;
For rather sleek our masters be than mild,
And Avarice considers not the child.

* Written before the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE
GOLD FETTERING GRACE

23

XXV

And woman, nature's miracle of grace,
The pearl beyond earth's other gems divine,
Must enter in the mad commercial race,
For which is even coarser man too fine.
Plutocracy, the blame for this be thine!
For brothers shield not sisters from the strife
For that thy reign too strenuous makes life,
And frantic quest of lucre makes so keen
That daughters seek to lead, though formed to lean.

FOES OF FLOWERS

XXVI

And sometimes virgins, if they would advance,
Must win the favor of some varnished ghoul:
Yea, under Gold's despotic governance,
The price of their preferment oft is foul.
If they resent the smirk they face the scowl:
And in the garnished store, and on the stage,
Unfettered felons scarcely will engage
For valued places, daughters who disdain
To vend celestial gifts for mundane gain.

THE REJECTED VOICE
FRIENDLESS INDIGENCE

XXVII

What heaviness the serfs of labor know,
That earn in factories a little food.
Not Jeremiah could portray their woe,
Nor paint the sorrows of their servitude.
The poor may not such penalties elude;
For bullion, being dear, makes brethren cheap,
While smiles may shallow be, but frowns are deep,
And hardly shall misfortune find a friend,
For oftentimes do preachers but pretend.

HELOTS OF INDUSTRY

XXVIII

How groans in torrid mines the modern thrall.
How like infernos often foundries are.
Here there be pits that might a fiend appal;
Yet shine their master's palaces afar.
Out of the furnace rises fortune's star;—
Ruddy as gold that in a crimson tide
Deeply is steeped to make a crown for pride.
Such scarlet prizes Christians combat for,
And oft is yellow dross dyed red with gore.

CHAOS

XXIX

Some drudge too much, while some too little toil,
And vainly some for occupation seek;
Yea, often fruits for lack of plucking spoil,
While willing hands in idleness grow weak
On not refreshing fare. What vicious leak
And vile obstruction must conjoined impair
A mart so mad. Wealth weaves not anywhere
Kind bonds that could all guilds together bind,
Though none may wholly see while some are blind.

THE GIVER STONED

XXX

Columbia, thy Singer crucified
Shared not the affluence whereof you boast.
The Poet that might well have been thy pride
No friend in power found from coast to coast.
Because he sweetest sang you mocked him most,
And never he thine approbation knew.
The more he gave the bitterer men grew:
Strength calling crude, and sentiment uncouth,
And hissing at the dulcet voice of truth.

THE REJECTED VOICE
LOYAL ALTHOUGH WRONGED

XXXI

But thy foundations by the free were laid,
And though his blood by sons of thine was shed,
He deemed that always poets thus are paid,
And loved the land wherein he bowed his head.
For thee his breast would valiantly have bled,
And soon he trusted would the Eagle break
The fetters Greed hath forged; for naught might shake
His faith that thou wert favored of the skies,
And destined far to reach, and high to rise.

STILL THY SON

XXXII

And though his name you unto death ignored,
Thy largeness entered in him, and thy verve
Was in his soul apparent, as it soared
Despite or yoke or chain. He scorned to serve
In little sanctums, nay, nor would he swerve
From Truth's most thorny path. So in his sphere
As firm he proved as was the pioneer
That trod the western trail; and he is thine—
Thou Land of the Unbroken Battle Line.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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NATION ANOINTED

XXXIII

Beacon of Nations is thy rightful name,
And always should thy states resemble stars.
Thy torch of Freedom heavenward should flame,
Consuming chains, and melting prison bars:
But Mammon now thy native lustre mars;
And often are thy people trodden down
As low as serfs that kneel before a crown;
For gold is power, and man grovels when
The purse is mightier than sword or pen.

CHARITY?

XXXIV

In temples consecrated to the sick,
Wherein free service supplements advice,
There, even there, may captious pride be quick
To prove that donors may have hearts of ice,
And for their gifts exact a galling price.
Rail ye at carving of the conscious hound?
Faith, human hearts all scarified are found
E'en where the poor are healed. O Charity,
How often is contempt allied to thee!

THE REJECTED VOICE
WARDERS UNWORTHY

XXXV

Ye skies, if ever harshness be in vogue
In wards where man ostensibly is kind,
How suffers he whom brethren label rogue,
Who back of bars forbidding is confined.
Not to a tomb imagine him consigned,
For death doth never torture. Sepulchers
Contain not cruel keepers. Nothing stirs
To bind or scourge within the voiceless vault,
And there no fiend pays felon for his fault.

CRUELTY UNCONDEMNED

XXXVI

Now nothing so inhuman makes a man
As law that sanctions in his sight his crimes.
Seems conscience scarce to glimmer when the ban
Of legal wrath descends perchance betimes
On one that stumbles where another climbs.
They that the place of guardian profane
More sin than do transgressors they restrain,
For cruelty add they unto contempt,—
From censure safe, though not from sin exempt.

SOPHISTS MADE SULTANS

XXXVII

Now have we courts where sit judicial kings,
That prate, like tyrants all, of right divine.
If pose were proof of probity, might wings
Adorn these judges, that as further sign
Should halos have,—yet is their sway malign.
Like Czars unto the populace are they,
Yet do they still financial chiefs obey,
Making the law a labyrinth and snare,
Yea, and the high assize a covert lair.

TYRANTS OF TO-DAY

XXXVIII

Not by the people, nay, but all by these
Columbia is ruled, for void they make
Each statute that may plutocrats displease,
Whom worship they for wealth; so do they break
The nation's charter, prating—"Lo, we take
Our lofty stand thereon!" Thus land called free
In sooth is a judicial monarchy,
Wherein is truth contempt, whose meed is chains,
And like a prince the pettifogger reigns.

THE REJECTED VOICE
TRIUMPHANT USURPATION

XXXIX

Until that Court malignly made Supreme
Of autocratic power is deprived,
Rich gifts will more degrade us than redeem,
For Avarice its ruthless strength derived
From that tribunal, which by craft contrived
To seize its sovran place. Reduce its rank,
Else chains that glitter constantly will clank
On labor made a thrall,—yea, and the cross
Less will possess us than the God of Dross.

BONDAGE OR BEGGARY

XL

Civilization worse than savagery
Is that wherein must anxious legions choose
Or crucifying toil or beggary,
Alternatives all flesh would fain refuse;
While profit only to the proud accrues,
Who while the world lies sick rest satisfied
For that themselves so fully are supplied.
They that most power have to remedy
Appalling ills, contented cry—"Let be"!

CAPTAINS BY CRAFT

XLI

Thus thou, Democracy, art overthrown!

Torn is the charter that the Eagle gave.

Our captains by their cunning may be known,

And they that most should serve do but enslave.

Dead are the free, and dying are the brave,

And all the weary sowers shackles wear:—

If this be Liberty let man despair;

But still are we permitted to aspire,

For Freedom, like the Phoenix, springs from fire.

REAPERS THAT SOW NOT

XLII

And will the favored harvester not heed

The sower's cry, and grant his plea to reap?

Shall men be but as pawns controlled by Greed,

Whose numbers make their souls and bodies cheap?

Can conscience in a golden prison sleep,

And hark not when the poor for justice call?

Must great possessions make the spirit small,

And may the heart be satisfied with wealth

Expended selfishly, and grasped in stealth?

THE REJECTED VOICE

EQUITY

XLIH

The metal trails of travel and of trade

Whereon do thousand engines course the earth,

For man and not his masters should be laid,

For lord and lackey brethren are from birth,

Whose souls, when nobly weighed, have equal worth.

Give then unto the multitude all mines,

And break the fetters wherewith Greed confines

The frugal spinners that for spendthrifts toil,

And let but them that plough possess the soil.

MAKERS MOCKED

XLIV

Weavers of silk or samite, that must wear

Scorned coats of shoddy: Horny hands, that glean

Where softer hands have garnered: Serfs that bear

The burdens of a world that mocks as mean

The shoulders that support it: Craftsmen keen,

That carve rich gifts, yet nothing rich can buy:

Builders of mansions, that to huts must hie

When evening calls them home. Friends such as they

The day now breaking better will repay.

SONG BY THE DEPARTED SINGER
THE PATH TO PARNASSUS

Seventy sad times and seven

Have I trodden Gotham's streets,

Highest singer under Heaven,

Marching unto new defeats.

Seventy sad times and seven

Following some futile quest,—

Ever striving, never thriving,

Weary, yet devoid of rest.

Call we this the path to glory?

Seems such bitter journey blest?

Tells the Muse no brighter story

Where she most is manifest?

Call we this the path to glory?

Yea, for bards none other know:

He that rises earth devises

Only to reward with woe.

THE REJECTED VOICE

JUST DIVISION

XLV

More to the many, less unto the few,
Thus should commodities divided be.
Let captains all be chosen by the crew,
Else shall no man of modest purse be free.
Authority inclines to tyranny,
Even among the leaders of the poor,
And never sleeps the pride that would procure
Some prize equivalent unto a crown
Wherewith to make humanity bow down.

INTIMIDATED CULTURE

XLVI

Teach vassals in our universities,
That rightly should be Freedom's best defense,
For chancellors thereof bend cringing knees
To lords whose bounty shames benevolence,
Since tarnished are the revenues from whence
Are their donations drawn. Much they bestow,
But more the awed recipient must owe,
For they but give to grasp, and all that take
Their bribe-like guerdons, must obeisance make.

CAPS AND GOWNS AWRY

XLVII

Superiority collegians preach:—

Themselves are saviours of the land, it seems;
Yet how shall base initiators teach
High things to others? Ere this caste redeems
The crude, untutored herd it disesteems,
It must renounce its crass and cruel rites.
He that with worse than savage soul delights
To heap indignities on helpless youth,
Might learn refinement of the most uncouth.

THE CULT OF CHANTICLEER

XLVIII

Presumption takes an appellation new:

New Thought, forsooth, they name pretension now.
Pride ever prospers if this creed be true,
Though kings alone had pride enough, we trow,
To shake with war the world; but never bow
The head in meekness, saith this modern thought,
For wonders by a lofty pose are wrought.
Let sheep like creatures modest worth admire,
Large manners will more potent men acquire.

THE REJECTED VOICE
DOLOUR VAINLY DENIED

XLIX

Brisk converts spread the gospel of success—
Yclept Celestial Science. This some deem
Our land's religion, that would foil distress
With an ignoring smile, and as a dream
Dismiss each stubborn ill. Too proud they seem
Who thus defy misfortune, and explain
So facilely the mystery of pain,
Not feeling the divinity of grief,—
Yet sometimes valor leavens this belief.

PARLOR ASCETICS

L

Each Eastern faith becomes a Western fad,
And Asia's esoteric intellects
In salons preach and pose; yet bowed and sad
Are lands they left, and rightly man expects
High proofs of lofty wisdom, and rejects
The priests whose wards lie prostrate while they tell
How much their Oriental saints excel
Caucasian sages. If they be so wise,
Why do their flocks the pariahs despise?

THE REJECTED VOICE

37

FORGOTTEN SUMMITS

LI

And sins the Church against its soaring spire,
That over earth arising, seeks the sun;
For overlords the soul's perceptors hire
To sanction deeds by venal barons done.
Where be disciples of the Lowly One
When priests condone the mercenary art
That pays indeed the hand, but robs the heart;
While huts too low, and palaces too high,
Deface the valleys, or affront the sky?

A GUIDE ASTRAY

LII

How like a torch o'erturned appears the Press,
That makes us envy lands where few may read:
For while denouncing wrongs it would redress,
Itself doth reformation chiefly need.
It forms rank appetites it seems to feed,
For always fourth part of the world is young,
Though dirges for the dead be ever sung,
And what appeals to fools in vice confirmed,
Creates in youth gross liking, else unlearned.

THE REJECTED VOICE

PROFANATION

LIII

Now thrives the charlatan in his pretense,
For symbols cover all aesthetic sins.
Seem they in truth a substitute for sense;
And oft where reason ends the play begins;
While Circe shames the lyric world she wins;
With baleful charms without rebuke unveiled;
And song, by sensuality assailed,—
Celestial song, the language of the sky,
Full low declines as flutter tunics high.

BRIGHT FOUNTS DEFILED

LIV

Hallowed should be the histrionic art,
For potent is that art for good or ill.
Through eye and ear it enters in the heart,
To cleanse or to corrupt. It should fulfill
A mission always moral, while it still
Enshrined the light-winged laugh. Its dreams should tend
Not to obscure reality, but mend.
How must we therefore grieve as now we trace
To such a fount, broad currents that debase.

THE REJECTED VOICE

39

REMEMBER THE REAPING

LV

There must be tribulation in the state
When thus abominations blight the stage;
For Nemesis doth watch, though she may wait,
And ruthless when she rises is her rage.
Beware of vice when there be wars to wage,
For low must lie her votaries at length,
While verily in chastity is strength,
And righteousness is spear, and shield, and sword,
When far are battle banners flung abroad.*

PERSISTENT STORM

LVI

And always is the world the seat of war,
For pride, like penury, knows never peace,
And though in fortresses no cannon roar,
The elements of conflict still increase.
Deem not that treaties signed make battles cease,
Nor that a dove abides at every door
When clash of arms reverberates no more;
For carnal wickedness, and kindred greed,
More souls destroy than ever sword made bleed.*

* Written before the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE

CONFLICT FOLLOWS CORRUPTION

LVII

And not by any filching government
Can peace, however lauded, be preserved;
For all corruption seeks a fiery vent,
And thundrous visitations are reserved
For purchased senates, and for nations served
By sleek despoilers. Horrid Mars may fix
The price that for our shameful politics
Must yet be paid, and thus may war remind
That never are the Gods to guilt resigned.

THE EAGLE'S ÆGIS

LVIII

Guard thee, O greatest Country, arm and guard!
Beware the mighty armies of the East.
Else more than heavy seas may thee bombard.
With most to lose, be not protected least,
Lest vultures in thy ravaged borders feast.
Get thee more guns, for time it takes to mold
Those arms that rout all flesh, however bold,
And not with speed could skill or zeal provide
The force to stem Invasion's roaring tide.*

* All the stanzas from LV to LXVIII, inclusive, were written before America entered the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE

41

RIGHT NEEDS MIGHT

LIX

Truly is peace Columbia's desire,
For howsoever grievous be her faults,
She seeks not to extend, in manner dire,
Her buoyant reign; yet to repel assaults
Should she prepare, for only metal halts
The march of crowned dictators, and to save
Our Southron wards from swords that might enslave,
Is our benignant mission, that demands
The wise enrollment of protective bands.

CLOUDS ACROSS THE SEA

LX

We ne'er would fight, save only to defend
Our Western continents from Eastern hordes,
That yet may on this hemisphere descend
With weapons far more terrible than swords.
In Europe there be military lords
That fain would strut afar; and Asia, too,
Hath hosts whose peaceful visits we might rue,
For soon would brown or yellow clash with white,
Though souls be all one hue in Heaven's sight.

THE REJECTED VOICE
BUCKLERS MADE BROAD

LXI

Laud ye the Dove, and bow before the Lamb,
Whose followers do rather bless than blast.
Though monarchs to the Lion may salaam,
Such liberty as can all storms outlast
May but abide with nations that hold fast
To spiritual things. Yet still beware
Of squadrons drilled abroad, and rear with care
Such bulwarks as could rigidly beat back
Devouring wolves of war, should they attack.

PREPARE THE SPIRIT, TOO

LXII

Mighty America, if war must come,
May'st thou with heart as well as hand prevail,
And sing not any more, when sounds the drum,
Weak songs conceived in wine; for turn most pale
Cheeks flushed too much with pleasure, when assail
Things altogether sharp. Know, too, that bribes
Can but provoke an alien foeman's gibes,
Although at home may they lax stewards bend
Till Retribution's flaming bolts descend.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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SOURCE OF THE SHADOW

LXIII

Had Peace not been contemptible and cruel,
Then had not awful strife therefrom ensued;
For Avarice and Vice provided fuel
For fiery War, that hath with blood imbrued
Lands where embattled Greed sad hosts subdued
Ere thundered any gun. Thou, too, beware,
My too complacent Country, for you share
The tyranny and license that at last
Begot abroad the storm we view aghast.

CRIMSON THRONES

LXIV

While there be dynasties there will be wars,
For polished scorn, that courts personify,
Enacts political and social laws
That manhood burns to break. All thrones deny
The Dove of Fellowship: hence vultures fly
Around each royal house; and swords will reign
Till pride evokes, not homage, but disdain.
Then may all crowns, ere hosts now hot have paused,
Melt in the conflagration they have caused.

THE REJECTED VOICE

OTHER EMPERORS

LXV

And kings there be that no proud title claim;
Financial kings, on seats of dross enthroned.
Kings in authority though not in name,
Whose praises are by even priests intoned.
They also utterly must be disowned
Ere triumphs amity; for haughty Greed
Demands that multitudes or bow or bleed,
And peace abides with only brethrenhood,
That always is by Avarice withstood.

THE BROAD BUT CROOKED PATH

LXVI

The Pen's imaginations waxed depraved,
And beauty had departed from the Brush.
In music melody no more was craved,
And oft had carven marble cause to blush.
The Crow, forsooth, was jeering at the Thrush,—
As though insipid must be song not coarse,—
As though things fair could have nor depth, nor force;
And paved with such perversions was the path
Whereon came awful Thor in all his wrath.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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KINDRED DUPLICITIES

LXVII

Predicted scribes that battles would no more
On widest fields be waged. Declared they too
That envy, though it swayed their sires of yore,
Infected not themselves. When lo, they slew
A singer most profound; while Europe drew
This sanguinary planet's reddest blade.
Here might comparison in crime be made,
For such inhuman wiles as foster wars
Destroyed the Chosen Voice of Western Shores.

WAR AND THE PROPHET

LXVIII

Yea, there was consanguinity in guilt
Between the continents called New and Old.
Blood in torrential streams abroad was spilt,
While not afar, by stratagems less bold,
And yet, perchance, more callous, yea, and cold,
Was pierced a prophet's heart. Ha, do ye laugh,
Ye that would hemlock brew for bards to quaff?
Know, then, that stern though stellar laws requite
Like angry Gods, the bands that minstrels blight.*

* Written before America entered the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE
SACKCLOTH THAT SHINES

LXIX

Priests are Nietzscheans if they be not poor,
And hence by haughty prelates brushed aside;—
For spiritual grace may not endure
To dwell where souls in sackcloth are denied.
Should vestments be of satin? Not till pride
No more consorts with pomp. The hovel cries
Against the mansion, for what lords despise
Themselves do oft create; and famished want
Condemns contentment that looks never gaunt.

THE CROSS OBSCURED

LXX

Not Christ, but Caesar, dominates the Church.
Think not that war could otherwise so scourge
Caucasian nations. Much doth blood besmirch
Embattled brothers' altars. Prayer must purge
Cathedrals of their dross ere priests may urge
With potent eloquence their angry flocks
To love fraternal Peace. The cannon mocks
The Christian preacher, and proclaims with force
That crowns, or yellow coffers, hide the Cross.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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FATAL REVELRY

LXXI

The dying spirits dance, and likewise drink,
And perish of their own fulfilled desire ;
For revels Vice upon destruction's brink,
And out of pleasures builds the fool his pyre.
The very stars be instruments of ire,
Whereby is darkness evermore reprov'd,
And man, though far from orbs so fair removed,
Still must revere those hierarchs of light,
That while they garnish, also govern, night.

INJURIOUS COMFORT

LXXII

Obese the spirit grows in luxury,—
Yea, and the flesh must hardy fibre lose
On viands very 'rich. Our food should be
As fuel giving force, and all our thews
Should strengthened be thereby. Wise diners choose
Nor spicy sauce nor sweet, for simple fare
Is all our being wholesomely can bear,
And like as Spartans strictly should we train
The sinews that both hand and heart sustain.

THE REJECTED VOICE

LIGHT UNRELENTING

LXXIII

Regard not nature as a gentle nurse,
For drastic are her ways with gourmands weak,
And each unlicensed cup makes she a curse
Outweighing far the joys that topers seek;
And vengeance she infallibly will wreak
On all who slight her laws. Since she is strict,
And fails not ever fully to convict
Each rash transgressor, always man should live
In fear of light that can no lapse forgive.

LICENSE HATH HARSH LAWS

LXXIV

Inherent is the chastisement of guilt,
Whose sentence never wholly is deferred.
On less than sand are sin's foundations built,
And automatic scourging is incurred
By every wayward joy. They all have erred
Who deemed that guile could license keep secure,
For all unbridled appetites insure
Their own corrective pangs; and none escape
Such laws as give to sots a sodden shape.

THE REJECTED VOICE

49

GREAT IS GALAHAD

LXXV

Not as a penance, but a privilege,
Do saintly spirits promise to be chaste.
The vow of chastity is not a pledge
Of frigid sacrifice, for mystics taste
Angelic joys, while wanton lovers waste
Life's beatific fire. Souls turned to swine
See not themselves, but mask with maxims fine
The morals of the sty. Be not deceived—
High quests are but by Galahads achieved.

NOT PALLID SNOW

LXXVI

Beauty of Holiness! If that bright text
Deeply were felt, and highly understood,
Hopes of a fairer world, called now the next,
On earth might be fulfilled; for being good
Men would be glad, and age might be withstood.
Then hear, ye maids that scan the mirror, hear!
The best cosmetic is a conscience clear;
And not alone the lily, but the rose,
Its sweet complexion on the pure bestows.



BEAUTY IS PURITY—PURITY IS BEAUTY

LXXVII

Only in goodness dwells abiding grace,
And therefore they that plastic beauty prize
Most should abhor the vices that deface
The soul's apparent structure. Lustrous eyes
Proclaim a light less tangible, that lies
Within the deeper heart. The Artist, then,
Should worship purity, and prove to men
That form cannot be fair if thought be foul,—
Else blinder shall he be than any owl.

THE REJECTED VOICE

51

THE STAR THAT NEVER SETS

LXXVIII

Art may decline, as once in marble Greece
From fairest heights she fell ; but never sets
The star of Science, for as years increase
So mounts she more and more. Ne'er she forgets
What once she well hath learned, nor ever lets
Discovered knowledge die ; nor will she fail
At last to vanquish death, and pierce the veil
That seems the tomb to shroud. Like angels, then,
Will shine now murky earth's transfigured men.

NEW MEANS BUT OLDEN ENDS

LXXIX

Saints still are stoned, and earth hath martyrs yet,
Though neither steel now torture them, nor fire.
Still are true priests by Sadducees beset,
While harps arouse the crowned Philistine's ire ;
And truth encounters persecutions dire,
For Sophists in the seats of judgment sit,
And ancient error reaps new benefit ;
While keen as wolves in quest of fleecy prey,
Our gilded autocrats pursue their way.

THE REJECTED VOICE

THE ARISTOCRACY OF AVARICE

LXXX

All save themselves should don a uniform
If these rich lords might altogether reign;
And labor's only stronghold would they storm
With Asiatic hordes: yet these that fain
Would crush their countrymen with such disdain,
Like renegades bow down to foreign kings,
And treat vain titles as celestial things.
Slaves in their worship, traitors in their scorn,
At home they hector, but abroad they fawn.

CORONETS ACCURST

LXXXI

But can aristocrats be still admired?
Aristocrats, who cast the carmine gage
That moved skilled hosts, with Cain-like frenzy fired,
To dedicate all industry to rage,
And pen red history's most scarlet page?
And will the richest daughters of our land
Seek still some scornful lordling's empty hand?
Will not such social treason to the state
Beneath the people's banner now abate?

GILDED STRIPES

LXXXII

Plebian Pomp of many lackeys brags,
 Thus boasting of its power to debase;
For livery more lowers man than rags,
 And never peace will bless our warring race
 While potent governors themselves disgrace
By shaming them that serve. Forget not this
Ye mentors that deplore as most amiss
The war beyond the waves; for in the West
The branded soul in gaudy plush is drest.*

BADGES ABUSED

LXXXIII

Consider, too, how Gotham's stout police
 Oft wantonly their midnight truncheons wield.
Are we in sooth true champions of peace
 When thus authority defiles its shield?
 Though Albion takes now the tented field,
Not ruthless are the guards of London town,
For loath are they to beat transgressors down,
And though on battle's horrors we descant,
Our manners be not mild, but militant.*

* Written before America entered the war.

THE REJECTED VOICE

CANKERS IN SUCCESS

LXXXIV

Though often grievous faults cause men to fail,
Yet sins there be peculiar to success.
Are but the wanderers called fallen frail?
Might not the proud infirmities confess?
There verily is physic in distress
That purges souls of pride; while goals attained
With blood of brethren frequently are stained,
And hardly may true sympathy abide
Where love of glitter all is gratified.

PURSES IMPOTENT

LXXXV

Wealth may fine feathers wear, but finer faces
Much bullion may not buy. Nay, even Gold,
Although a God, may not command the Graces,
For sweetest flowers only will unfold
On virgin soil, and cultivation cold
Evolves but orchids bathed too much in musk,
That breathe Circean odors in the dusk;
While at the wayside modestly may bloom
A bud too rich for any crystal room.

THE BRAVE IN BONDAGE

LXXXVI

For sins are some rejected, some retreat
Because of maladies that mar the brain,
And oft infirmities explain defeat,
Yet harken, ye that failure so disdain,—
The good may lose where grosser creatures gain,
For that their spirits are too brave to bend
To tyrants that might aid them to ascend;
And low may such be brought, and tightly bound,
For having rather spurned than loved the ground.

DELECTABLE DEFEAT

LXXXVII

Some nobly fail, while others basely thrive,
And oft will even triumphs well achieved
Congeal the bosom, and the heart deprive
Of warmth that must expand; and therefore grieved
May be the Gods, and mortals much deceived,
By victories in worldly manner won;
While sometimes deeds delectable are done
By men that would atone for faults confessed,
Whose kindness is contrition well expressed.

INTERLUDE

O pale gold song, if precious be thy hue,
Wherefore art thou throughout the West repaid
With disavowal? Why with taunts gainsayed
In isles where acclamation most is due,
And not with roses recompensed, but rue,
In fields thou makest fair? Seems night afraid
Of orbs whereby it grandly is arrayed?
Nay! Yet dull eyes dread often visions true.

Ah, if the lyric heart but hated be,
Fear, fear, ye silver doves, to be so fair,
And all ye flame-clad birds, in secret wear
Your always red array. Soar not, but sleep
Where never gales thy vivid grace may see,
And warble never, lest she therefore weep.

SONG BY THE DEPARTED SINGER

THE LYRIC CROSS

Because long thorns my laurels be,

Because I thrice have drained the gall,

Because my home is Calvary,

Because my song is mocked of all,

Because I have no peer in pain,

My harp can deathless heights attain.

And I, that stir not any string

That first my blood hath not imbrued,

And I that in the tempest sing,

Hence sing with strength of storms endued.

I that am nailed unto my lyre

Speak therefore with prophetic fire.

THE REJECTED VOICE

GORY ESCUTCHEONS

LXXXVIII

New Attila would cast down all mankind
Himself to still uphold; and all his caste
Would burn, or stab, or suffocate, or blind,
Poison or drown the world, to so hold fast
To their patrician powers. They would blast
The skies to save their order. In their pride
All things not Caesar's have they thrust aside;
For autocratic spirits thus aspire
To places only won by deeds most dire.

ARCHITECTS OF ARMAGEDDON

LXXXIX

These captains only could control retain
Even along their own Germanic Rhine,
By seizing alien soil. If o'er the slain
Their spiky helmets triumphantly could shine,
Red victory would hosts at home incline
To honor tyrants still. Learned they this law:—
Barbaric crowns demand barbaric war,
For peace advances things more civilized:—
Hence awful Armageddon they devised.

THE REJECTED VOICE

59

HEIGHTS INHUMAN

XC

The Hun on Horseback tramples freedom flat.
Across a prostrate world would he parade:
And spurning conscience to accomplish that,
Of fire and air hath he foul weapons made.
Not dire enough for him were bomb or blade.
Super-Gorilla! Man hath he surpassed, —
Witness thereto his victims scorched and gassed.
Rise, rise, Democracy! And so hale down
This Kaiser of the Sanguinary Crown.

FRAGILE STRENGTH

XCI

Call no man strong, for always flesh is frail,
Despite apparent force. The body's thews,
However vigorous, may not avail
'Gainst sudden bolts; and never Spring renews
The form that once is crippled, nor can dew
A faded mind refresh. All lofty thought
One stroke may disarrange, and render naught.
The all-engulfing grave holds nothing great,
And souls are wisest when they supplicate.

THE REJECTED VOICE

THE HIGHER VICTORY

XCII

May war our hearts to higher onsets urge
Against proud greed, whose very gifts veil guile.
Perchance the Hun again is Heaven's scourge,—
A scourge incurred by venal years and vile.
As him we fight, let all things that defile
More than the sword be feared. Much freedom lost
Now let the world recover. Match war's cost
With moral gain. With blood are we baptized
That despots might be evermore despised.

PRETENSION DEPOSED

XCIII

For only visible accomplishment
Hereafter honor men. Let vapid rank,
Whereby has merit been deposed, and pent
In circles lower, prance no more and clank
O'er patient toil cast down. Chiefs should we thank
For service only. They should wear no star
Whose names are nobler than their natures are.
Prone have we been mere postures to applaud,—
Henceforth to proven worth each prize award.

THE REJECTED VOICE

61

CONVERTED BY CONFLICT

XCIV

War should revive us,—yea, it should convert
Cold hearts and fevered heads, and both make sane.
Then shall its rigor heal as well as hurt,
Then shall our wounded suffer not in vain.
No foe afar is half so much our bane
As torpitude within. Out, lamps that blight!
There is a soul of gloom in garish light;
For always dissipation spells disease,
And red elixirs reek with deathful lees.

THE STAFF OF TRIUMPH

XCV

Let there be liberty! Let there be growth
Of all that makes the strength of man humane.
May war diminish gluttony and sloth
As precious compensation for its pain.
Since we but fight to end the War God's reign,
Let not cupidity ourselves enslave;
Nay, nor intemperance, that is the grave
Of high endeavor. Righteous let us be,
For virtue is allied to victory.

THE REJECTED VOICE
ENLIGHTENED WARFARE

XCVI

Even as athletes hardily prepare
For valiant sport, so we, in days like these,
Should ban each pleasure that would strength impair,
For vanities most plague whom most they please;
And he that lolls remains not long at ease.
Prone to be sick are creatures that are soft.
Now let us live as men that look aloft.
Like Freedom's Gladiators, swift and hard,
Ten thousand thousand should Old Glory guard.

MEANEST RENEGADES

XCVII

Falsest of men are factors that defraud
Their native land while legions die for it.
As limbs of Judas should they be abhorred,
And served as foes for liberty unfit.
Suspected overlords alone permit
Such thieves to thrive, for though they wear a mask,
To pierce such semblance is no hopeless task
For rulers who themselves are all sincere,
And through corruption's visor care to peer.

THE REJECTED VOICE

63

GORGE NOT

XCVIII

Lords of most precious larders, where are stored
All things that armies eat,—lift up your eyes,
And cease, for threatened Freedom's sake, to hoard
The bread of victory. Can ye but prize
Corroded profit, while your Country cries
For sacrifice supreme? While hosts are slain
Will ye but glory in ignoble gain?
A pampered form implies a famished soul;—
Fear then to wax too fat on venal toll.

LOWEST LOVE

XCIX

He that loves not his country more than life
Loves then a life that rodents might despise,
And calls not more the cancer for the knife
Than cowardice for extirpation cries.
Not to some haven, but to Hades flies
The fugitive from duty. Furies greet
The craven at the goal of his retreat:
For terror with the timid heart abides,
And never safe is he that meanly hides.

THE REJECTED VOICE
VENALITY FAR DIFFUSED

C

Why charge we that commanders famed for coin
Destroyed a bard whom never barons knew?
Faith, may not magnates precious things purloin
From serfs they see not? Yea, 'tis sadly true,
And golden maws exhaled the breath that slew
The Voice arisen, for beyond their marts
Their sordid aura even taints the arts,
And miserable henchmen have they made
Of advocates not occupied with trade.

SEERS NARROWLY SEEN

CI

And prone are prelates also to oppose
New prophets now inspired; for not inclined
To rites or ancient rituals are those
Who most to-day uplift the heart and mind;
And deaf may priesthoods therefore be, and blind,
To men of lyric vision, who descry
Our Age's omens with divining eye:
And oft they bear the name of infidel
Who by their living faith deep things foretell,

THE REJECTED VOICE

65

THE PROPHET'S CROWN

CII

Congeaing pride hath rich men led astray—
Love they the power given by their gold.
For sake thereof sell they their souls away,
And still accumulating, grow more cold:—
And he whose story now is being told,
The great protesting spirit of the age,
Was doomed to feel the ruling power's rage,
And wear the crown of thorns, and drink the gall,
For still must prophets bear the woes of all.

THE TEST

CIII

Upon the advent of the Muses' priest
Society's true worth forthwith is weighed.
If false men be, they him neglect as least
Of undeserving ones; but well repaid
Are fearless harps in forums not afraid
Of truth divinely sung. Who then can trust
The moralists whose bard without a crust
Starved as they richly dined? How shall they hide
When all men hear the music they denied!

THE REJECTED VOICE

THE BARD OF BROKEN HEARTS

CIV

Great woes that all men fear, and many feel,
Familiar were as heart beats unto him;
For new equivalents of rack and wheel
His rest curtailed, and all his tasks made grim.
Thick was the air, and even daylight dim,
Where lived he far from love, and banished there,
Where toil was Tophet, fearful did he fare.
Long hanging on the Sacrificial Tree,
Brother of Sorrows let his title be.

BEAUTY BESET

CV

Chaste opal, now thy haunting glamour hide,
For when thy soul was woven into verse,
The Age of Brass might not such odes abide,
And hence the Singer's halo was his curse.
His car of triumph was a lowly hearse,
For when his harp diffused thy moonlight hue,
All Sheol rose against such grace, and slew.
Then seek, nocturnal gem, some starry mine,
For being fair, thou art for man too fine.

THE REJECTED VOICE

67

THE CROSS IN THE CLOUDS

CVI

The poet is a creature of the clouds
That drift between low earth and lofty Heaven.
He lives above the world's ebullient crowds,
But while supernal light his clay may leaven,
He learns that though black sins be only seven
Life's crosses may be countless; and he finds
Himself the centre of cyclonic winds;
While for each fleeting glimpse of Paradise
He pays expatriation's awful price.

LIGHT OUTLAWED

CVII

For it is writ in nature's tragic book,
And deeply on the singer's brow inscribed,
That he who may on truth and beauty look
Must live neglected, and must die proscribed.
To him shall never glory be ascribed
Till death mocks eulogy. So shall he find
That men most cruel are to hearts most kind;
And madness, consummation of his woe,
Shall seize him on the heights, and overthrow.

THE REJECTED VOICE

FAIR BUT FATAL

CVIII

Since Beauty's visage never is convulsed,
 Why asks the Muse of Song such sacrifice
That all save wounded suitors are repulsed,
 Though myrrh they bring, and every pleasant spice?
 Ah, why will only tears of fire suffice
To move a spirit altogether fair?
Death, only Death, can cause thereof declare;
But still will melody true hearts entrance,
Though first must storms else listless strains enhance.

AT LAST DEFINED

CIX

Genius is Christ within us;—'tis the flame
 That saves with sympathy a world else lost:
And oft though green-eyed pedagogues defame,
 Its light grows never less, although its cost
 To him that hath is great, and jealous frost
Assails its soaring fire. When, therefore, gibes
Reward the ardent singer that describes
Veiled things with magic voice, be sure that still
Men crucify their king upon a hill.

THE REJECTED VOICE

69

TALENT AND GENIUS

CX

Appealing to impenetrable hearts

The harp whose note soared highest throbbed in vain:

For kindliness, when genius comes, departs

From lesser talent, that itself would reign;

While often culture teaches mean disdain,

Or graces that but gloss, and who shall prize

The voice of verity, by woe made wise,

When pride proclaims the priest, and sordid gods

Engender song that sinks, and art that nods.

STORM TRANSPOSED

CXI

Lacked not the thunder an interpreter

When purple chords with tortured hands he smote;

For tempests his sublime companions were,

And never gales were from his course remote.

Through leaden night winged he a silver note,

And hark'ning to the roaring hurricane

He hymned the requiem of armies slain;

For space did rather magnify than mar

His vision, though the red storm raged afar.

THE REJECTED VOICE

RESIGNATION

CXII

He wrote not as do they that live at ease,
But with a spirit suffering and sad:
Nor were his lyrics such as lightly please,
Though lives of men will they at last make glad.
A bruised, but not a bitter heart, he had;
And though his earthly stipend was disdain,
He hated not the authors of his pain,
But felt that all obeyed necessity,
And that his grief fulfilled his destiny.

NONE CAST OUT

CXIII

No wayward child of woman did he blame,
For neither height nor depth by man was made.
Out of the cosmos with a cry he came,
Not having fashioned sunlight, nay, nor shade.
Not his the law that causes buds to fade,
And flesh makes also frail; for higher power
Conceived the weed, as well as formed the flower,
And spirit that impels us to ascend
Abandons not our being when we bend.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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SONS OF NECESSITY

CXIV

Yet truly bitter penalties there be
For all transgressions, and all grace we lose
By moral laxity, that men may see
What course the God within each heart pursues;
Yet lo, that Will which good or ill can choose,
Without its own volition first was born,
And in our souls contending death and dawn
Obey Necessity's unchanging law,
Whereby is won or lost internal war.

FLOWERS BORN OF THORNS

CXV

Therefore to sorrow did the bard consent,
Not breathing maledictions on his foes.
From martyrdom springs much to not lament,
And worthy was the poet of his woes.
Lo, even bitter wind from heaven blows,
And they that laugh but little wisdom learn,
For purest lights through shadows we discern,
Yea, heaven's glory is by day concealed,
And but by night are noblest orbs revealed.

THE REJECTED VOICE

PERSECUTED WINGS

CXVI

But sad it was that he whose harp was born
To preach the truth, and spread the law of love,
Should balked have been by them that look with scorn
On everything that cometh from above.
Who immolate the lamb, and slay the dove;
Who cage the thrush, and bruise all blossoms sweet;
Who are most happy when they grab or eat,
And being many, can together blight
The few devoted bearers of the light.

SORROW ASCENDANT

CXVII

Such was the persecution of his soul,
Denied its beautiful and high desire,
And subject to a sordid world's control
Though burning with the earth's most precious fire.
What are the ends that such sad means require?
The answer lies beyond our narrow scope,
Yet cannot heaviness extinguish hope.
We trust that sorrow rises, and will rest,
And grief we deem medicinal and blest.

GREENEST EYES

CXVIII

There was not one, not one, of all the throng
That prate of brotherhood, and love, and light,
But raged in secret at his lofty song,
And hated him upon his lonely height.
O moon and stars, how mean is worldly might!
How self-deceiving are such guides as these.
Still prospers the proud tribe of Pharisees.
False even in the councils held within,
They own not even secretly their sin.

SOLITARY BUT UNSHAKEN

CXIX

But not detraction, not indifference,
Not blindness, nor dissecting sight too sharp,
Not art that was a pose and a pretense,
Not codfish culture, prone to sniff and carp,—
Not all might shake the faith that fired his harp.
Its day he knew was deathless, and its dusk
The shadow of a transitory husk
Which hid awhile the everlasting heart,
That sang on earth, yet dwelt from dust apart.

THE REJECTED VOICE

GRACE FROM GLOOM

CXX

He out of tribulation garnered grace,
And hid within his breast the lyric tear.
With harrowed heart, but unrevealing face,
He met such fortune as the bravest fear.
New sorrow would with each new scene appear;
And all the world's false gods frowned on his way,
For neither would he praise them nor obey,—
Evincing so the valour of the meek,
Whose attitude nor wilful is, nor weak.

BRIGHTNESS SADLY CONCEIVED

CXXI

Night knew not shadow dolorous as he,
Nor sighed the wind so deeply as his soul.
None other son of earth did angels see
Afflicted like to him; such woeful toll
Takes genius on the chosen, and such dole
On alien heaths feel they; for wrath and storm
Beget the rainbow, whose transcendant form
Comes heralded by clouds. Asks mortal why?
Yea, and the heavens do but answer—"Die."

THE REJECTED VOICE

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HIS BRETHREN

CXXII

No friends had he save the unfortunate,
 Who in the dusk continually dwelt.
Brother was he to men of scant estate
 Who like himself both fire and frost had felt.
His music could but wounded bosoms melt,
For conquest turns men cold, till they attack
The grace themselves, despite their triumphs, lack;
Resenting much the poet's vision keen
That penetrates the most pretentious screen.

TREASURES NOT TERRENE

CXXIII

His was the golden accent of old Greece,
 Yea, his the everlasting Orphic shell;
Yet stellar wealth could but his want increase
 In this bribed world of brokers, whom no spell
 Not cast by coinage, can or charm or quell.
Hence though he clasped the Harp of All the Years,
The rivers of the world to him were tears,
Whose springs within all bosoms he beheld,
Though in their proud concealment he excelled.

THE REJECTED VOICE

HANDS OF EVIL HUE

CXXIV

Ye men of words, within whose haunts he bled,
The day of retribution now draws nigh.
Deem not the love of dulcet language dead
Because men rightly pass your jingles by.
Ye slew the Harper that alone stood high,—
Slew him that had the gift ye feigned to seek:
O, with his blood your hands shall always reek!
Ye gazed contented while the vulture tore
One that could higher than the eagle soar.

HEARTS WITH HORNS AND HOOFS

CXXV

Though bears may growl, and bisons madly glare,
Ye more inhospitable are than they,
And never crept the jackal from his lair
More darkly than met ye your native prey.
O vacant hearts, your best ye always slay!
And more do ye authentic genius hate
Than snakes abhor a form erect and straight.
More venomous than any viper is
Wax such as ye on hearing song like his.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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ARROWS OF ENVY

CXXVI

The gift of melody his heart possessed,
 Conjoined with tribulation so intense,
Might tenderly have moved a tiger's breast,
 Or vultures touched with poignant eloquence.
But hark, ye scribes, whose arrows him drove hence:
In vain he sought your citadels of cant,
For envy's heart is triple adamant,
And easier shall stones be made to feel
Than jealous souls be moved by Song's appeal.

THE PEARL DEFAMED

CXXVII

Now Genius, that is earth's supernal gem,
 Is coupled with decadence. Fire divine
Inflated dullards shamelessly condemn
 As something almost foul; for souls that shine
Eclipsed pretenders more today malign
Than ere did clods before. Hark how they rail:—
"Great bards are vain, or mad, or sick, or frail";
While cries some clam-like literary clan:—
"The prophet scarcely was a gentleman."

THE REJECTED VOICE
MEASURING THE IMMORTALS

CXXVIII

Fain would these gentry the immortals judge
As fops might true reformers estimate.
For mediocrity's familiar grudge
Against the highly good, and therefore great,
Leads pompous little coteries to prate
About the manners of some soaring mind
Whose only social code is to be kind.
The smallest word that ever envy said
Berates some deathless voice as underbred.

EARTH'S GRANDEST NAME CORRUPTED

CXXIX

Were gentle not a name assumed by scorn,
A name that pomp is licensed to profane,
A name of all its native sweetness shorn,
A name that every tyrant takes in vain,
And did it prove a man in sooth humane,
Well might the world that Christian name revere,
For brothers would it not abash, but cheer;
But now is it a title to deride
As being but a prop for meanest pride.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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PETTY ETIQUETTE

CXXX

Patrician breeding merits but contempt,—
The Flunkey's Bible founds thereon its laws ;
Nor is anointed royalty exempt
From pettiness the parvenue adores,
And every truly knightly soul abhors.
Sham culture, and veneered gentility,
New pomp, and ancient pride, as one agree
To mock at honest manners, and applaud
Such customs as with only cads accord.

THE THRONE OF SONG

CXXXI

But on the Cross can epic lays be sung,
For none save he that suffers on the hill,
Pre-eminent in agony among
Uncounted co-inheritors of ill,
May stir the harp eternal, and fulfill
The prophecies that fire the firmament
Ere stellar grace to mortal tongue is lent.
Yea, only hearts most hurt may wake the chord
Whereby are spirits that were dead restored.

THE REJECTED VOICE

BENIGN STORM

CXXXII

Though still is loveliness allied to joy,
 In shrouded places dwell all dreams profound.
The storm that seems malignly to destroy,
 Like some satanic influence unbound,
 May still celestial principles expound;
And sharp though be the pale wind of the north,
Miasma may not bide its coming forth;
While often stinging pests incline to swarm
Where earth is fecund, and the air is warm.

SOURCE OF SUBLIMITY

CXXXIII

When after many mediocre years,
 By regnant scribes and Pharisees made mean,
The poet that is prophet too appears,
 Through guise most lowly is his glory seen.
 Not proud is his approach, nor yet serene,
But like a martyr, bleeding doth he march,
With only heaven for triumphal arch,
Till high as Calvary he dares to climb,
Where anguish makes his utterance sublime.

PRELUDE TO A REQUIEM BY THE DEPARTED
SINGER

As melancholy as the deep lament
That breathes through vibrant boughs when fall the leaves,
And nature for her garlands withered grieves,
Is that unheeded voice that here gives vent
To lyric sighs, that in a bosom rent
Were born of pain, that evermore conceives
The singing heart, that breaks till death retrieves
The beauty man repays with banishment.

But sad though be the song, its throbbing source
Exceeded far in dolour any dirge
That ere through twilight swelled; though not remorse,
Nay, but a world remorseless, tore the breast
Whose sorrows through these poignant stanzas surge,
Like waves that only rise in quest of rest.

THE REJECTED VOICE
RADIANT PROOF DERIDED

CXXXIV

Ye lords of letters, might it be allowed,
By ye, that so uplifted are today,
That Genius by the Muses most endowed
Should slighted live, and pass unwept away?
With scoffs ye this deny, yet answer—"Yea,"
The mighty songs he disregarded sang.
Say that the serpent hath no more a fang,
But say not that by arbiters like ye
Could poet aught save immolated be.

THE REST IS RETRIBUTION

CXXXV

Like Judah in the sacred long ago,
False priests ye bless, and all true prophets ban.
Among ye walked a bard whose name was Woe:
For drink ye gave him dregs, for bread but bran.
Rejoice, entrenched detractors, while ye can;
But certain be that when his wrongs are known
Ye heavily shall pay for every groan
Whereat of yore ye laughed; for whom ye slew
Such voice upraised as death can but renew.

DISSONANCE CALLED IDEAL

CXXXVI

And blatant advocates of brethernhood,
Whose rasping speech was like their spirits coarse,
As much as sleekest sycophants withstood
A voice whose fineness was allied to force;
For none can perfect grace from strength divorce:
Hence choirs that think to sing, but only shout,
Cast, with a snort, a harp like Homer's out.
Its classic euphony they called a fault
Because their staves could but the ears assault.

TONGUES, TONGUES, TONGUES!

CXXXVII

And noisy orators of anarchy,
Or preachers of Eutopian extremes,
Who rail at reason that cannot agree
With fair but futile economic dreams
Born of the moon's imponderable beams,—
These, like Philistines, banned the Singer's mind,
That soared, yet knew how slowly mounts mankind;
And thus each rash as well as regnant class
Opposed the Prophet that did all surpass.

THE REJECTED VOICE

ISOLATED LIGHT

CXXXVIII

In loneliness his spirit's glory lay,
And likewise lay therein his worldly loss.
Not any wilderness, nor desert gray,
More barren could have been than was the course
He through rich highways took; for no remorse
Feel they that slay brave singers, since the gift
Whose melody can multitudes uplift,
Wholly is hateful to the haughty few,
Whose postures ill comport with aught so true.

LUMINOUS SHADES

CXXXIX

Dark winds to him were dulcet, and his song
Made loss supremely lyric. Every strain
Revealed an exiled heart, condemned to long
For glad isles far away; while each refrain
Imparted a new nocturne unto pain.
High orbs whose hallelujahs ne'er are hushed
Scorned not the gloaming euphony that gushed
From him to heaven; for the sky reveres
The music that atones for mundane tears.

THE REJECTED VOICE
THUNDEROUS PINNACLES

85

CXL

In him reached suffering its apogee,
For sorrow hath its summits, and with throes
Is fire divine from muffling flesh set free,—
Set partly free, for though the spirit glows
Through sublimated walls, they still enclose
The essence shining, and while waxing thin
They most torment the brighter self within;—
Yea, travail rives the soul that seeks the day
As lighter grows its prison house of clay.

WISDOM UNWELCOME

CXLI

He was a prophet, so he warned in vain;
He was a seer, so hated was his eye;
He was a poet, so they mocked his pain,
He was a dreamer, so they let him die;
For Troubadours of Truth must perish by
The meanness they unmask; and coming war
Roused dread vibrations in his breast before
World hate awoke; yea, pangs of his presaged
The tempest brewed in Tophet, ere it raged.

THE REJECTED VOICE
THE ALCHEMISTIC HARP

CXLII

All shadows he transmuted into songs,
And made cimmerician misfortunes serve
As strings for his deep shell, while from his wrongs
Was melody distilled, yea, grace and verve
His voice derived from woe; for skies reserve
Their higher gifts for them whose earthly state
Is furthest from the affluence called great
By vassals of the world, who rail or jeer
At gems which draw the light of Heaven near.

GRIEF'S HALO

CXLIII

Afflatus of the moon his music had,
And Morning Star, and Star of Evening too,
Made luminous his song, albeit sad
Must strains so moving be, and orbs he knew
That did with aura not of earth endue
A vision golden even in its grief,
Whose depths endowed with loveliest relief
Dreams fairer than the dimpling break of day,
Dreams never garish, nor yet ever gray.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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TRAGIC COMPANIONS

CXLIV

Well was his soul acquainted with the snow,
And knowledge of the hail his heart possessed.
The tearful rain did on his harp bestow
The gift of liquid speech, till he addressed
The grievous storm in anthems that expressed
The grandeur clouds enabled him to view:
Likewise he searched the depths that make the dew
Profound as well as clear; while out of frost
He fashioned silver strings, though pangs they cost.

FALL HIS FRIEND

CXLV

Young Spring with vernal energy vouchsafed
To buoy his sometimes bruised and bleeding feet;
For though in chains his spirit often chafed,
His muse, transmuting bitter into sweet,
In March remembered May; while Summer heat
Kept kind his injured heart; but Autumn's soul,—
Not dim though deep, like twilight's aureole,
Endowed his music with a golden mood—
Not crabb'd like Winter, nor like April crude.

THE REJECTED VOICE
GENEROUS ONLY WITH WORDS

CXLVI

Finding but show while seeking substance went
The Twilight Bard, who did as victim test
The specious pen and parchment sentiment
That scribes, for praise and pay, compose with zest.
How false are they his wrongs make manifest.
Their lips salute the sky, their hearts the ground;
Their gifts are words, their sympathy but sound;
For in the world whose livery they wear
Wealth is a hound, and poverty a hare.

MASKED PHILISTINES

CXLVII

Their kindness is confined to printed page,
With precept it begins and likewise ends.
The voice that soars awakens but their rage,
That grows according as the song ascends.
Death to the Lark their governance portends,
And like besetting shadows they assail
The spirit gifted as the Nightingale:
Yea, with the fowler's execrable skill
They capture Heaven's Troubadours, or kill.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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A GRAVE THEIR GIFT

CXLVIII

They would have mocked the Son of Mary, they
That such a giver such a welcome gave.
Behold, their prophet also was their prey,
Although his coming they professed to crave.
What should have been his kingdom was his grave.
Forgive, ye skies that blue above us bend,
Still, as before, America defend,
Though wont of yore hath Heaven been to rage
'Gainst lands where suffered singer, saint, or sage.

HOW THEY HAIL THE HARP

CXLIX

False are the sounding tongues that make accurst
The garrulous professions. Aught they say,
Like breath-filled bubbles that a breath will burst,
Lacks even the solidity of spray.
None hate so much sincerity as they;
And when the skies a miracle perform,
And boundless heights and depths conceive in storm
A fiery Voice, that gives to words true worth,
Their shouts of crucify proclaim his birth.

THE REJECTED VOICE
SUBSTANTIAL DREAMS

CL

They that with steel, with mortar, and with stone,
The castles of ambitious commerce build,
Or will that widest archways shall be thrown
Across historic tides,—theirs is a guild
Whose visions are by verities fulfilled;
And mighty and yet modest are such men:
But tribes that fondle purse, or flourish pen,
Are politicians all,—who stalk or prate,
Yet more consume than ever they create.

COMMON CLAY PUFFED UP

CLI

Desire like conquerors to domineer
Moves not war-chieftains only. Shapes that stalk
Like spirits privileged to frown or sneer,
Obstruct each low as well as lofty walk
Of rampant life; though speciously men talk
Of brethrenhood: yea, cliques to fame unknown
Form little oligarchies of their own;
While pleasure's votaries lean most to pride;—
None care to dance where some are not denied.

THE REJECTED VOICE
SELF-CONSUMING DOLE

91

CLII

O blessed dispensation, that all pain
Must be its own destroyer, and that woe
Consumes the nerves till pangs no more remain,
As feeds red flame on brands that make it glow;
Though horrible theology shriek—"No!"
Calling its fiendish doctrines hope and faith.
Love is a myth, and reason but a wraith,
If dolour follow death; but earth and sky
Say to all souls—"Fear not the Great Good-bye."

DEATH MALIGNED

CLIII

Religion like a staff can man sustain,
Yet some it makes morose, and others mad;
And often hath it planted seeds of pain,
Confounding faith with fear, and making sad
The rising of the sun, for none are glad
That call death worse than cold: yet men set free
Will license oft mistake for liberty,
And yielding to intemperate desire,—
Their pleasures turn to plagues,—their loves breed ire.

THE REJECTED VOICE
TRUTH'S TABERNACLE

CLIV

A Church on visible foundations reared,
With righteousness as its eternal rock,
Wherein should virtue highly be revered,
A Church whose fold refused not any flock.
That praised the soaring mind, yet would not mock
The supplicating knee. That called elect
Each human soul, whatever its defect.
Such Church our drifting generation needs
Like dawn to rise above the dusk of creeds.

A SHRINE FOR ALL

CLV

Not under spires alone, but in each spot
That innocently may attract or cheer,
Should be enrolled such bands as hunger not
Oft soporific homilies to hear.
Whether afar they congregate, or near,
Enough if they adopt the Church's name:
So every field not vicious might it claim;
Nothing exacting save the single vow
To keep the moral code, oft threatened now.

PLEASURE SANCTIFIED

CLVI

Each sport, each labor, each activity,
 That wholesomely can occupy rich time,
And keep from sensual declivity,
 Though rated rather simple than sublime,
 Should this our Church, not calling doubt a crime,
In supple bonds embrace; for none may reach
Aspirants all, who but reprove or preach.
Hence ministers not moribund employ
For holy purposes each harmless joy.

RELIGION UNCONFINED

CLVII

Union and glad communion hearts require
 To keep from sin or mournful solitude;
But spirits may in other ways aspire
 Than such as are by pious souls pursued
 That kneel in temples where may not intrude
The light of every day. Joy may refine,
And pleasure hath an attribute divine,
When amiable currents we deflect
From pride, excess, or sloth, or lax neglect.

THE REJECTED VOICE
GOSPEL OF BROTHERS

CLVIII

The curse that cleaves humanity is caste,
That causes every kingdom to decay.
It even can the sanctuary blast,—
Yea, sometimes most it thrives where converts pray:
And men called worshippers conceive that they
Ascend when less assuming ones they slight.
Rear then a Church wherein no more this blight
May thin the blood, and call not grand, but base,
The hand withdrawn, or half-averted face.

BOW DOWN

CLIX

Spirit of Glory, shall we call thee God,
Or art thou greater than the grandest term?
Art thou considerate of every clod,
And mindful, too, of each ambitious worm
That would ascend, despite a form infirm?
Dost thou with everlasting breath pervade
Sublunar forms, that quickly seem to fade?
Tombs tell not, yet devoutly do we kneel,
For more than brain may find the breast may feel.

INTERROGATION

CLX

What could perfection by creation gain—
Creation marred exceedingly by sin,
And likewise plagued by sorrow and by pain?
And how could changeless Deity begin
To plan dark vales? Could highest glory win
New triumphs in a world as low as this?
Why picture the omnipotence of bliss
Within a star so black? The skies are good,
But not by man may night be understood.

MATTER BEGETS SPIRIT

CLXI

Where matter is not, there is nothingness.
Why call that dead which is alone alive?
May not chaste fire and air at dawn express
Divinest beauty? Do not stars derive
Their grace from glowing substance? Need it rive
The heart of man to feel that sunset skies
Owe not to arts miraculous their dyes?
All that we dream of spirit, yea, and more,
Nature embraces in her boundless store.

THE REJECTED VOICE
ENCHANTMENT EVERYWHERE

CLXII

Yet why may nature not be named divine?
Doth not her sovranly enfold ourselves?
She is the water, and she is the wine,
She is the bird that soars and mole that delves.
No need hath she of faeries or of elves
To make mysterious her ancient groves,
For runes are whispered where each wild heart roves,
And altogether magic is the moon,
And even magic is the fire of noon.

DIVINITY BEHELD

CLXIII

And all the attributes of Deity
The universe about us manifests.
The Gods are visible, and love can see
In every lamp its lord. All growth attests
That heavenly are nature's own behests:
And man is but the highest ape to her,
Whose doom she therefore doth not long defer.
Evil is wholly animal, and hence
Death hides no demons though its veil be dense.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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ORIGIN OF INSIGHT

CLXIV

Came not from chaos our intelligence,
For by mentality was mind conceived.
Thought postulates a psychic fount from whence
Flowed understanding forth. Love hath believed
In Over-Love, because the heart received
Sweet intimations of its occult source,
And reason is a more than mortal force,
For only by some principle divine
Could man's perception so be made to shine.

BEAUTY NE'ER PROFANE

CLXV

And do the Gods no answer give to prayer?
Shine not protecting Deities above?
Do skies whose very vapors oft are fair
Naught hold for man to worship or to love?
Yea, and we learn devotion from each dove
Whose wings like snow are white. For all bright things
Likewise are sacred, and the heart hath strings
That stretch unto the stars. Kneel then once more,
O spirit that wast doubtful, and adore.

THE REJECTED VOICE
OBEISANCE THAT UPLIFTS

CLXVI

None may with astral elements commune
Save in an attitude of prayer and praise.
Only the kneeling spirit sings in tune
With firmamental psalms. The mind we raise
When neck and knee we bend, and he that prays
Attracts thereby a light whose constant law
Can strength as by a miracle restore;
For might is in submission, and upborne
Is he that bows, and so renounces scorn.

HEAVENLY UTTERANCE

CLXVII

Know ye that poetry is sacred speech—
Speech too divine to be or coarse or crude.
Through splendid language all religions reach
The heart behind the clay; and never rude,
Despite their force, are words with fire endued.
Yet mark—that Muse whose beauty makes devout
Rapt congregations—multitudes now flout
As idle froth; for scribes that balked their best
Themselves have made the noblest art a jest.

UNRUFFLED REST

CLXVIII

All our endurance hath an end in death.
 Pain kills, and then is anguish overpast.
 The principle of life is joyful breath,
 And only what is fair is formed to last.
 Though young, yet failed the Starlight Singer fast.
 Few were his years, but sorrow made them long.
 He bore the burden of the age's wrong,
 And when his heart might combat hate no more,
 His soul found Sleep's illimitable shore.

EMPYREAL FAITH

CLXIX

So passed to Peace, through fire that but refined,
 One who by trial had been proven true.
 One who had learned the doctrine which is kind—
 That limits not salvation to the few,
 But blesses like the skies when they are blue:
 And all the midnight in the hearts of men,
 And all the virulence in envy's pen,
 May not obscure the sun-rise truth he shed,
 For song endures, though sire thereof be dead.

THE REJECTED VOICE

TOO LATE

CLXX

Ah, many will for him hereafter grieve,
When nothing can he benefit thereby;
But none sought once his anguish to relieve,
Though multitudes above his tomb will cry —
“We would not, had we known, have passed him by.”
Yet he not scribes believed that so protest,
For while he lived their like made but a jest
Of his distraction. False as truth is fair—
Sport they derived from his supreme despair.

GOLD INCORRUPTIBLE

CLXXI

Had he displayed such riches as must rust,
His silver voice would quickly have prevailed;
But he among the merchants dared to trust
In lasting wealth alone; and therefore failed
His quest for earthly food, and therefore railed
The autocratic word-men that professed
Much to adore the fire he most possessed,—
Celestial fire, which can alone redeem
From futile dalliance the tribes that dream.

NEMESIS NEXT

CLXXII

And ye that gave your greatest such a cup,
Deem not that earth or Heaven will forget.
Ye blithely filled the awful chalice up,
But guilt entails its punitive regret,
And surely will the world arraign you yet,
For wiles win not immunity for wrong,
And eloquence, though hated, still is strong,
And hosts at last will question you, and cry—
“Why left ye Song’s Messiah thus to die?”

DARKNESS PUT DOWN

CLXXIII

He that went wandering in hostile vales,
With heart adapted only to the hills,
One whose demise the guilty world bewails
When sated with the cruelty that kills,
Like dawn will come when death detraction stills,
For time and death for martyred voices fight.
With song then exorcising blinding night,
Bays on his brow, and lightning in his hand,
He shall uplift the meek, and curb the grand.

THE REJECTED VOICE

SWORD OF SUNRISE

CLXXIV

Look to yourselves, destroyers, in that day
 When earth the harp thus resurrected hears.
His soul survives in songs ye might not slay,—
 Songs that the bondman loves and baron fears.
The woe that once seemed weakness but endears
When master dreamers of injustice die,
And fast shall Pharisees before him fly,
And shaken shall be every yellow throne,
When comes the Voice of Hearts into his own.

ASLEEP ON SHORES THAT SING

CLXXV

Where rose his first, there rests his final home,
 And often pallid tides approach his grave.
When living he had loved the fields of foam,
 And been familiar with the wind and wave.
The gift of epic utterance they gave,
And meet it was that he should there repose.
Released from night and all its nether woes,
Upon symphonic shores he lies asleep,
While mounts the Song of Ages from the deep.

THE REJECTED VOICE

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CRAGS HIS SEPULCHRE

CLXXVI

Thou art a shrine, thou ancient cliff and gray,
Whereon is carved the Singer's couch of stone.
Wild dawns will decorate his tomb with spray,
And giant winds will make his music known.
More splendid shalt thou be than any throne,
For birth and death unite thee to a bard
Like thee made everlasting. Lofty guard,
And lyric grave! On thee, great rock, abides
A heart attuned to storms and crested tides.

HARP OF HESPERUS

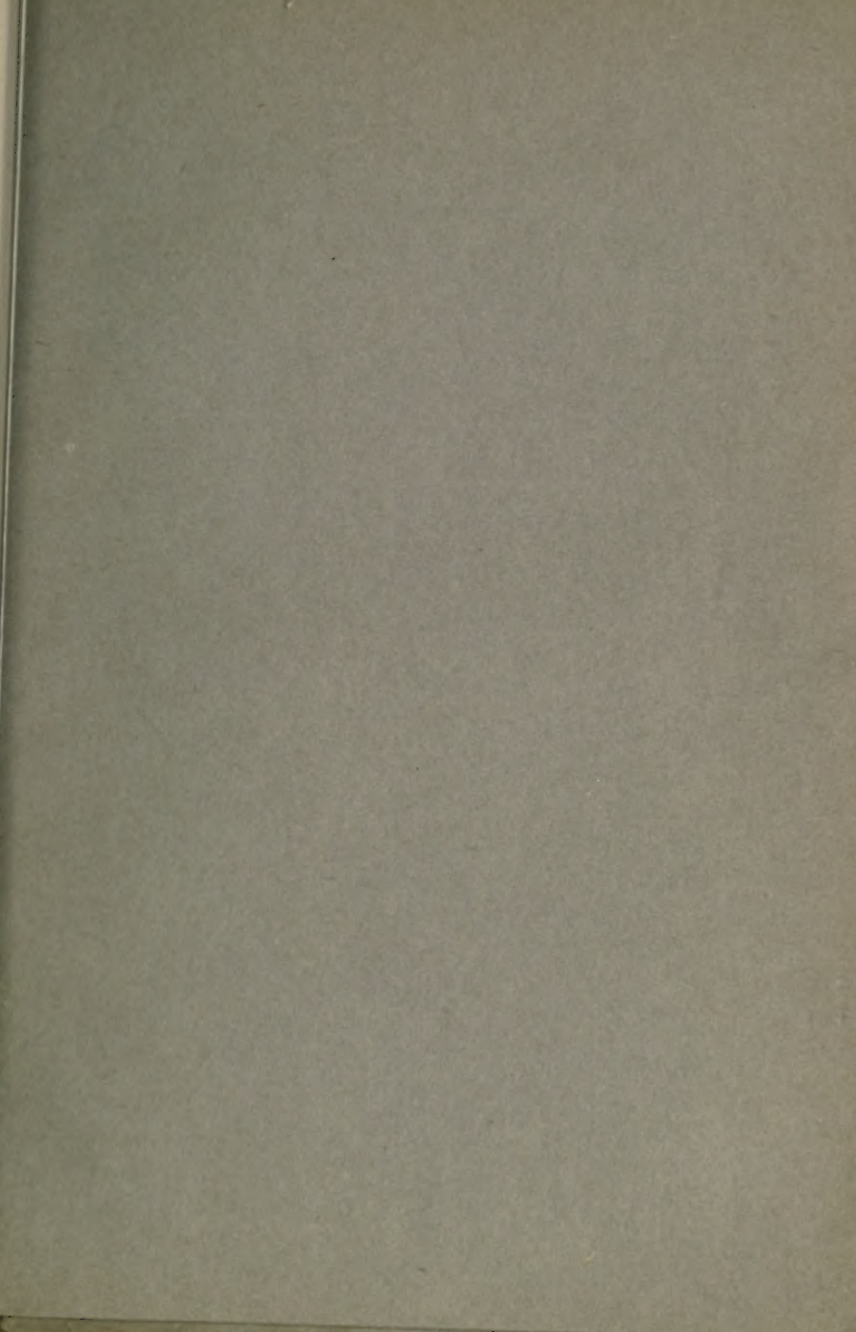
CLXXVII

Stirs not his dust, but his rejected voice
Highly will soar above the silent tomb.
His song will hearts else dolorous rejoice,
And share not, but transcend, his body's doom.
Blossoms he left that evermore will bloom,
For being lovely, always will they live.
Such garlands only the immortals give;
And he that sang on Golgotha alone,
In Hesperus will be hereafter known.

FINALE

Sleep, Harp of Night, that on a brooding shore
Idealized the dark. Thy flame divine,
On earth refused, doth fairer therefore shine
In courts like morning clear, whereto can soar
Delivered Truth, that wears not any more
A garb or black or gray. Peace now be thine,
Lone Singer, that set up a golden shrine
Among dead hearts, that would but dross adore.

Bloomed never rose upon a summer bank
That could the perfume of thy song excel:
Yet would not autocrats confess thy rank
Until they shattered thee, O moonlight Shell!
Yet climbed thy spirit as its casket sank,
And vanquished is this Valley of Farewell,



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Gardner, Nelson

The rejected voice; a song of genius
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